PRADHAN: (a) The Govt, has decided to add a length of approximately 11000 kms to the national Highway network in the country.

(b) Details are given in the Annexure. *(See Appendix* 185, *Annexure No.* 29)

(c) Development and maintenance including upgradation of national highways is a continuous process.

(d) The allocations are made State-wise for total national highway length in each State and specific national highway-wise allocation is not made.

Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts

1079. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL:Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to set up a separate Export Promotion Council for handicraft items made in small cottage industries;

(b) the total amount of export of handicraft items during the last five years;

(c) the impediments being faced by the handicraft industries and their exporters; and

(d) the details of the plans Government initiated to redress the grievances of exporters of handicraft items?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) For promotion of export of handicrafts and Carpets, Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts and Carpet Export Promotion Council are already in existence.

(b) The total amount of export of handicraft items during the last five years is as under:—

SI. No.	Year	Total export (Rs. in crores).	
1.	1993-94	3797.06	
2.	1994-95	4517.52	
3.	1995-96	4621.69	
4.	1996-97	5594.80	(Provi-
5.	1997-98	6457.69	sional)

(c) The impediments being faced by the handicraft industries and their exporters include: availability of uninterrupted power supply; bad road conditions; classification of artmetalwares for duty drawback; non-introduction of Shatabdi Express on Delhi—Moradabad Section; non-availability of air-strip and five star hotel at Moradabad; need expressed by exporters for some changes in labour laws; closure of many saw mills at Saharanpur etc.

(d) Concerted efforts are bieng made by the Government to redress the grievances of exporters of handicrafts item by taking up their issues with the concerned authorities. The progress of action taken is being reviewed periodically at high level meetings.

Withdrawal of Subsidy from Janata Cloth

1080. SHRI K. R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that last year Government widthdrew the subsidised Janata Cloth Scheme as reported in the news item published in the Indian Express dated 14th November, 1997;

(b) whether the scheme was withdrawn without advance intimation by the Finance Ministry;

(c) whether as a result of this, weavers in several States have lost subsidy amounting to about Rs. 60 crores; and

(d) the action taken by Government to relieve the misery of twenty lakh affected weavers?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The. amount disbursed under the scheme varied from year to year. In 1997-98 an amount of Rs. 2787.68 lakhs was released as subsidy to State Governments.

(d) Through a number of schemes launched by the Government at the beginning of 8th Plan, weavers producing Janata type cloth were to enhance their skills, develop new products for the requirement of both indigenous markets and exports. The Government is actively considering to continue the Market Development Assistance in a modified form for some more time to help marketing of handlooms indigenously.

Cotton Corporation of India's Plan for better cotton cultivation

1081. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES' be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Cotton Corporation of India has started an ambitious plan for better cotton cultivation in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the villages chosen under this plan, State-wise; and

(d) the ' aims and objectives of the village adoption programme alongwith the criteria for selection of villages under this programme?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, Since 1995-96, Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) has started a development/extension activities programme for better cotton production in the country. This programme includes:—

— Production/distribution of certified label Seeds, Pesticides.

— Village adoption programme, Dissemination of technology, Organising Field days and Seminars etc.

— Integrated pest management in Cotton.

— Cotton Crop Surveillance and Extension Service.

— Support to Research and Development Projects of Agriculture Universities & Research Institutions.

— Promoting Cotton Cultivation in non-traditional areas like Orissa, Sunderban Tracks in West Bengal, Jammu Devision in J&K, Tanjavur Distt, in Tamil Nadu.

— Improvement in existing G&P Factories and construction of Modern sheds and godowns etc.

(c) The number of villages chosen by CCI, State-wise during 1997-98 and 1998-99 are as under:

States	No. of Villages	
	1997-98	1998-98
Rajasthan	12	25
Haryana	18	32
Punjab	25	18
Gujarat	38	41
Madhya Pradesh	05	—
Andhra Pradesh	24	32
Karnataka	32	69
TOTAL	154	217

(d) The aim and objectives of the Village Adoption Programme are as below:—

— To demonstrate the impact of quality seeds and scientific methods of cotton cultivation on production and quality of cotton.

— To avoid inter-mixing of seeds of different varieties with a view to maintain purity of seeds in case of straight varieties by following "One Village One Variety" concept and to prevent intermixing of seed cotton.